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# The Right to Freedom

The Bulletin of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna"

## Robbed Office

In the night of March 16 strangers broke into the apartment housing the Bierastsie office of Viasna. They stole 2 computers, 2 monitors, a printer, a fax-machine, a Xerox, a power adaptor, a modem, a scanner, 2 recorders, a camera, a charger and a tape recorder.

The police launched criminal proceedings under Art. 205 part 3 of the Criminal Code.

## Students Get Expelled from College

On March 20 the administration of Mahiliou Polytechnic College expelled third year students Aliaxandr Paulovich and Aliaxandr Kalita. The Mahiliou Lieninski borough juvenile committee had earlier agreed to that measure.

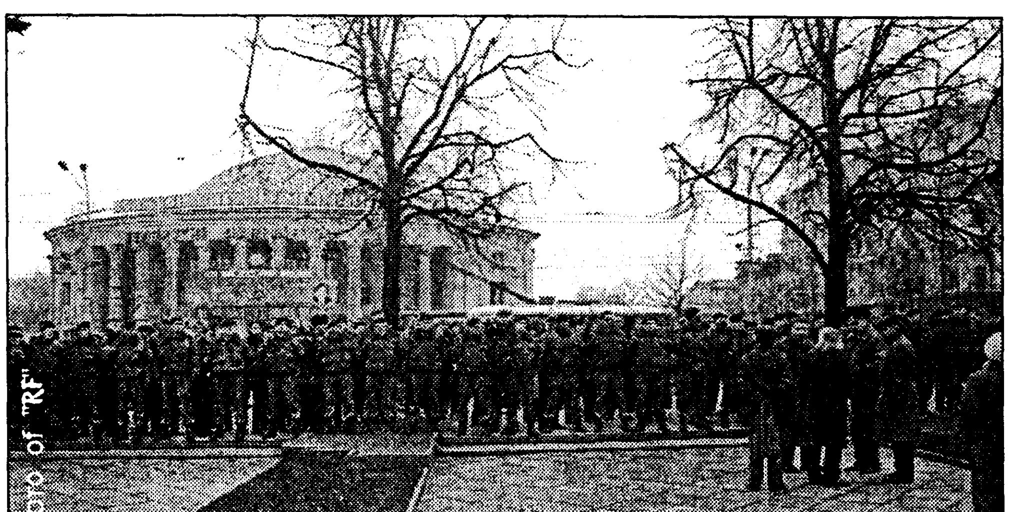
Aliaxandr Paulovich and Aliaxandr Kalita are activists of the Aurochs youth movement. On March 14 Shklou District Court found A. Paulovich guilty of Ypublic insult to the President of the Republic of BelarusФ (the first part of Article No. 368 of the Criminal Code) and fined him 20 minimal salaries.

Aliaxandr Kalita has been administratively punished several times for distribution of printed editions and agitation materials during the electoral campaign.




# Mournful Tradition

### *The Belarusian authorities celebrated Freedom Day with mass arrests*







According to its organizers, this year the Freedom Day celebration was to have been peaceful, without any confrontation. People gathered in Ianka Kupala square in order to put flowers to the poet's monument, to sing together the national anthem "God Almighty" , to listen to the songs of the popular Belarusian rock-bands and bards, then go to the monument of another Belarusian poet, Iakub Kolas and lay down flowers to his monument as well.

At 12 a.m. on March 24 about 1 000 people with flowers, white-red-white flags and strips gathered in Kupala square. After putting flowers to the monument and singing songs people went toward Iakub Kolas square, but the special police forces got in their way. Some police official demanded the leader of the Belarusian People's Front Vintsuk Viachorka, who headed the column, tell the demonstrators to roll up the flags. Otherwise, the police would consider the column as an unauthorized procession.

*(continued on page 2-3)*

# MOURNFUL TRADITION

(Continued from pages 1)

People rolled up the flags and went further. However, near Victory Square the police was in their way again. The cordon consisted of "cosmonauts" – fully equipped policemen, wearing helmets and holding shields. They immediately started to beat people, detaining everyone on their way, including the occasional passers-by and journalists. They forced the Reuter correspondent ***Vasil Fiadosienka*** into a car, tore his certificate and ticket to Afghanistan (he intended to go there on duty mission on the day of detention). They also smashed the costly photo supplies of the correspondent of the Russian ITAR-TASS agency ***Viktor Tolochko***. In Iakub Kolas square they also detained eleven women, who wanted to meet the column with songs. ***Viachaslau Siuchyk, Paviel Sieviaryniets, Liudmila Hraznova, Valiery Shchukin, Zmitsier Bandarenka*** other well-known Belarusian activists were detained as well, all in all more than 60 people.

The lawyer of Human Rights Center Viasna Valiantsin Stefanovich commented on the events in the following way: "At first everything was quite peaceful. Then the police beset the pavements and started to beat and detain people. I saw one of them seize a woman by her head and hit against a billboard. An officer of Miensk City Board of Internal Affairs, wearing plain clothes, was directing the process. The police continued detentions in Iakub Kolas Square. They beat people (most of them of old age) who came to lay down flowers to Iakub Kolas monument, with truncheons, and forced them into their buses."

The police took the detainees to Miensk Tsentralny and Savietski BBIAs. Among the latter ones there were:

***Valiery Hierasimau***
***Uladzislau Sauka*** (13 years old)
***Zmitsier Sauka***
***Ryhor Kiiko***
***Natallia Kiiko***
***Zmitsier Bandarenka***
***Hanna Iahorava***
***Tsimafiei Dranchuk Novik***
***Andrei Iahorau***
***Iury Ziankovich***
***Andrei Liakhovich***
***Viachaslau Siuchyk***
***Paviel Sieviaryniets***
***Valiery Shchukin***
***Iauhienia Pikul***
***Iury Palcheuski***
***Anatol Prasalovich***
***Dzianis Nosau***
***Siarhiei Lysakou***
***Edvard Zaikouski***
***Zmitsier Karpienka***
***Elia Niekrashevich***
***Valiantsina Vaiushyna***
***Axana Akhremchyk***
***Liavon Achapouski***
***Aliaxiei Smolski***
***Uladzislau Ihnatovich***
***Siarhiei Hvozdzikau***
***Mikhail Hvozdzieu***
***Iryna Shershan***
***Arkadz Piartsouski***
***Mikola Lavitski***
***Andrei Taustko***
***Tatsiana Ialovaia***
***Piatro Kshyk Iarmolienka***
***Hanna Siuchyk***
***Aliaxandr Shevialienka***
***Siarhiei Tryfanau***
***Liavon Sadouski***
***Zmitsier Dashkievich***
***Kiryla Papkou***
***Andrei Taustyka***
***Siarhiei Biazdzieniezhny***
***Piatro Rusau***
***Viktar Kavieshnikau***

This list is not complete.

Actions in honor of the 84th anniversary of the Declaration of Belarusian People's Republic took place in other Belarusian towns and cities as well.

In Horadnia more than 500 people participated in the unauthorized meeting. The police detained 22 people, including vice-Head of the BPF party Iury Khadyka, ex-Head of Agrarian party Iauhien Luhin and two journalists Ц correspondent of the newspaper Glos nad Nemnam Andrei Pachobut and member of the editorial staff of the liquidated newspaper Pahonia Aliesia Sidarovich. They also beat Vadzim Saranchykou, while detaining him.

Horadnia activist of PA HRC Viasna Iryna Danilouskaia said: "People wanted to come to the Archeological museum. We only wanted to lay down flowers, but the police cordon let some people through. Their authorities pointed at the people to be detained. It was all happening in Savietskaia street, the city center. Participants of the action saw the police beating five youngsters at a street corner. They laid the detainees down on the ground and kicked them with feet. About 40 people managed to get to the New Castle and lay down flowers to the memorial board to the participants of Tadeush Kastsiushka rebellion."

Among the detainees were:

***Iury Khadyka***
***Siarhiei Malchyk***
***Vadzim Saranchukou*** (was accused of organization of the action)
***Viktar Sazonau***
***Iauhien Luhin***
***Edvard Dzmuhouski***
***Zmitsier Ivanouski***
***Sviatlana Niekh***
***Mikhail Patreba***















*Mikola Hom*
*Alieh Zavadski*
*Ihar Lapiekha*
*Aliena Sidliarevich*
*Rehina Stankute*
*Andrei Shustouski*
*Andrei Pachobut*
*Raman Ramashka*
*Mikola Liemianouski* (was accused of organization of the action)
*Iauhien Shabunka*
*Aliaxiei Kuchar*

***On March 25*** in Maladechna representatives of democratic parties and public organizations laid down flowers to the K.Ahinski monument outside the musical college and to the memorial sign "To those who suffered for freedom and independence of Belarus" in the town center.

Nobody interfered with laying down the flowers to K. Ahinski, about 100 people participating in the event. This action was peacefully. As for putting flowers to the memorial board, it was different. The police with an unknown major and major-lieutenant Koshal at the head interfered with this action.

As a result the policemen detained ("for a talk", according to their words) Eduard Balanchuk, Aliaxandr Kaputski, Siarhiei Boskin and took away the legally registered flag of the Board of Horadnia BPR Adradzhiennie.

***On March 28*** Miensk Tsentralny Borough Court considered the administrative cases against the participants of the Freedom Day Celebration in Miensk on March 24. Judges Paliauchuk and Natallia Vaitsiakhovich reached the following verdicts:

1. ***Aliaxiei Smolski*** – fined 20 minimal salaries;
2. ***Zmitsier Tarulis*** – fined 20 minimal salaries;
3. ***Aliaxandr Sheviaienka*** – warned;
4. ***Valiery Hierasimau*** – fined 20 minimal salaries;
5. ***Siarhiei Tryfanau*** – warned;
6. ***Liavon Sadouski*** – fined 20 minimal salaries;
7. ***Viktar Dashkievich*** – 10 days of administrative imprisonment;
8. ***Andrei Liakhovich*** – warned;
9. ***Kiryl Papkou*** – the trial postponed to 10.30 a.m. on March 80;
10. ***Zmitsier Bandarenka*** – the trial postponed to 11.30 a.m. on April 2;
11. ***Iury Palcheuski*** – the trial postponed to 12.00 a.m. on March 29;
12. ***Edvard Zaikouski*** – the trial postponed to 12.00 a.m. on March 29;
13. ***Mikola Lavitski*** – warned;
14. ***Andrei Taustyka*** – warned;
15. ***Siarhiei Biazdzieniezhny*** – warned;
16. ***Piatro Rusau*** – fined 20 minimal salaries;
17. ***Uladzislau Ihnatovich*** – the trial postponed to 3.30 p.m. on April 1;
18. ***Paviel Sieviaryniets*** – the trial postponed to 3.00 p.m. on March 26;
19. ***Zmitsier Karpienka*** – the trial postponed to 3.00 p.m. on March 27;
20. ***Liavon Achapouski*** – the trial postponed to 11.00 a.m. on April 3;
21. ***Tsimafiei Dranchuk*** – the trial postponed to 2.30 p.m. on March 29;
22. ***Viktar Kavieshnikau*** – 10 days of administrative imprisonment;
23. ***Viachaslau Siuchyk*** – the trial postponed to 3.00 p.m. on March 28;
24. ***Andrei Humin*** – warned.

a Horadnia Lieninski Borough Court has considered the administrative cases against the participants of the Freedom Day action ofa March 24 for a week and passed the following verdicts:

1. ***Siarhiei Malchyk*** – activist of PA HRC Viasna – 10 days of administrative imprisonment. Now he is on hunger strike.
2. ***Vadzim Saranchukou*** – 10 days of administrative imprisonment (the judge passed the verdict in his absence, so he is still free).
3. ***Raman Ramashka*** – warned;
4. ***Mikhail Patreba*** – warned;
5. ***Viktar Sazonau*** – fined 20 minimal salaries (200 000 rubles);
6. ***Mikola Liemiasheuski*** – fined 150 minimal salaries (1 500 000 rubles);
7. ***Maxim Liebiadzieu*** – warned;
8. ***Sviatlana Niekh*** – fined 50 minimal salaries (500 000 rubles).

***On March 29*** Miensk Tsentralny Borough Court continued trials over participants of Freedom day Celebration. The judge reached the following verdicts:

***Edvard Zaikouski*** – war-ned;

***Hanna Siuchyk*** – warned.

*In photos – Freedom Day in Miensk.*




# "THEN THEY FORCED INTO A BUS..."

## *EVIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE DETAINED DURING THE CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM DAY IN MIENSK*

***Aliena Rashetnikava:***

"On March 24 I participated in the celebration of Freedom Day. Near the entrance to the metro station "Iakub Kolas square" I noticed people standing still, without moving forwards or backwards. I came a bit further and noticed a large police cordon. The special police forces didn't let people come into the subway. Then the police started to push people back. I saw a policeman breaking a correspondent's photo camera. They started to beat young people near me... I didn't know what to do. At first I thought about going down into the subway, but then recollected the tragedy at the Niamiha metro station in 1999. The police ringed people and started to force them into buses. A policeman ran up to me, I asked him not to detain and not to beat me, but he wouldnTt listen. They didn't tell me the reason for my detention. Approximately at 2.30 p.m. the policemen took me to Miensk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. I asked them to release me as soon as possible as I had left a three-year-old child home alone. When they were drawing the report of my detention I noticed the signatures of the policemen that had nothing to do with my detention. I asked them why they had done that. They didn't answer anything. I asked them to take me to their authorities. They answered that the court would discriminate my case."

***Artsiom Iarmolienka:***

"'When we came up to Victory square there was a police cordon. The column stopped. Then somebody ordered to start arrests. A policeman ran up to me and kicked me in the solar plexus. They pulled me into a bus. In some time they took there some other journalists and started to beat one. A man got on the bus and said something to them. They apologized to the journalist, released him and took us to Miensk Tsentralny BBIA. There they kept me till 2.45 p.m. when my grandfather took me home."



## ANDREI KLIMAU:
# MAYBE I'LL HAVE TO VIE WITH LUKASHENKA..."

***In some day after Andrei Klimau was released from prison, our correspondent interviewed him at office of PA Human Rights Center Viasna. Andrei came there together with his wife Tatsiana. Young, attractive, energetic, he didn't differ much from his time in Parliament...***

***– Andrei, you've spent more than four years in prison. What influence did this time make on you?***

– I started to value the joy of life more. Why is it so lovely? Even sadness is an emotion that makes you think. The worst thing is to retire into your own shell and notice neither good nor bad. Not only you, but other people can also feel bad. Taking into consideration that I executed a certain oppositional mission, my aim was not only to save myself, but to help the others as well. In 1996 Viktar and I knew who we were fighting against. We were prepared to anything, though we could hardly imagine that Viktar would be kidnapped.

***– Being in jail you certainly watched the ongoing events. Does the present reality disappoint you?***

– It is very bitter and sad... The only thing that calms me down a bit is my release. Small as it may be but it is still a victory, not my personal one but the victory of the opposition, human rights organization including yours.

In general, the events in the country are disastrous. The Belarusian people have turned into masochists – they seem to like being mocked at. That's why they are so indifferent to the despotism the authorities practice towards the oppositional leaders, human rights activists. Indifference, first of all to oneself, destroys society. One should keep to the present laws and demand that others act in compliance with them. Not everyone can take responsibility for somebody else, but it is necessary to demand that people should have this attitude to the law.

I am glad that I am free now; it is a valuable gift for me. I know many people who think like I do. I will try to reach every Belarusian. Now I will work with the United Civil Party (UCP), then I intend to develop human rights activity, including support to those human rights organizations that have been helping me. Anything could happen to me and your attention has possibly saved my life. My family and I are infinitely grateful to you for that.

***– Now it is very difficult to get the people to be actively involved after the election. Now you resemble a new-born. What do you think we should do?***

– There's only one way Ц to fight

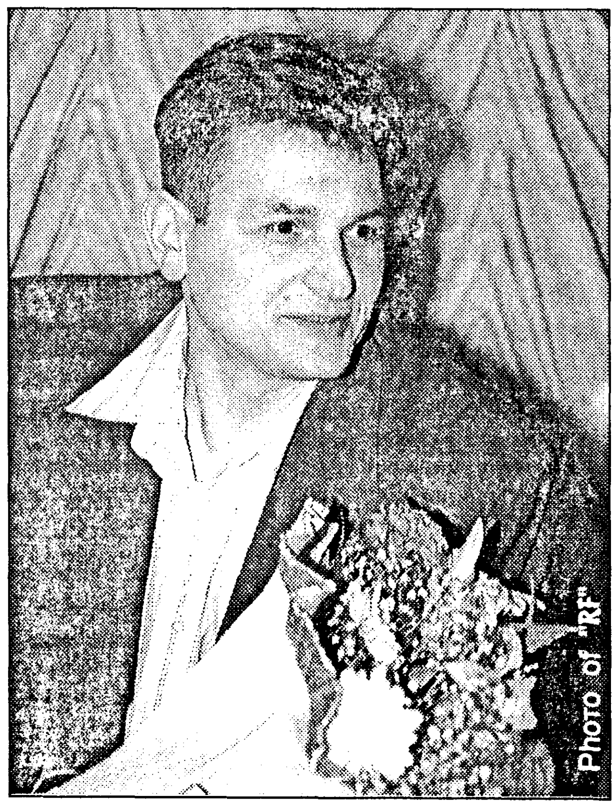


Photo of "RF"

against the incumbent regime, with the despotism, to be more precise. It is impossible to fight against the State because the State is us, after all. First of all, we should understand that every dictatorial regime exists because of the violations of laws, even if it creates these laws. That's why it is necessary to struggle for the execution of laws on every level – starting from every provincial official up to the president. My personal view of my release is that that the president fears the public and international opinion. It is very sad that Russia still encourages his actions based on violations of human rights and suppression of the democratic institutions of our country. That's why all people, including those dealing with human rights activity and politics, should understand that we can receive support to our country only in the West. That's why it is necessary to build up contacts on the European political arena. It is an unusual fact, but ordinary American citizens sent me letters of support – they wrote to Russia. Well, the address was Belarusian, but they thought that they were writing to Russia. They don't know that Belarus is a country itself. How can the West support us if people don't even know about our country? It is a great pity, but the isolation Lukashenka created, has turned us into a black hole – it seems that we don't exist. That's why we have the task to inform the leading politicians of Europe and the USA that there's an alternative to Lukashenka, there are political parties and human rights movement that are ready not only to defend human rights but also to build the State on the democratic principles. It is a matter of topical interest after September 11 when all the world saw where the terrorists that attack skyscrapers are bred. The civilized countries understood where the danger came from. However, the most terrible thing is that before September 11 there had been the danger of the international acknowledgement of Lukashenka's dictatorship, everything was leading to it. Leaving alone the fact that the oppositionTs actions helped Lukashenka win the election, it has almost helped him to receive the international acknowledgement through this election in which it was taking part.

However, we should admit that at present Lukashenka is the most known and the strongest politician in Belarus. Now there's no alternative to him, and we should create one. Secondly, in order to create an alternative we should be sure that the chosen candidate won't follow Viktar Hanchar or Hienadz Karpienka.

We should believe in the alternative, but we should check it before the Presidential election. People should know that somebody can protect them, they can depend on someone. There's no use in feeding the public with promises. If I state that you will do everything and help everybody after the election – it means that I will only redistribute people's crosses: somebody will suffer less, but the problems will remain unsolved. So, we should start today. Somebody should influence the State bodies that violate the laws, rob people; someone should influence on the State officials who commit international crimes by selling armaments to the countries who wage war on the civilized world.

All Belarusian economy depends on export. We can't survive without the international market, without the World Trade Organization and Europe. We bounded ourselves by Russia, but nobody wants to understand the simple fact that Russian doesn't need us.

Till September 11 the international community treated Lukashenka quite calmly. Today we should show to Europe and America that if they don't give timely support to the democratic institutions and human rights organizations, the situation can become uncontrollable and it will happen not in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, but in the center of Europe. If people, well-known politicians, disappear in broad daylight, it is abnormal and is fraught with conse-

quences. The present regime is criminal, uncivilized, that's why we can expect it to commit more large-scale crimes. At present all politicians that want to reach anything in Belarus must deal with the foreign policy, because, I should emphasize it, Belarus is not known in the world well enough. Who goes abroad, what for and what are the results of these journeys, their aims? I think that the work that's being done towards these ends is not enough.

As regards the people – in order to be understood one must reach them, not disappear as it happened to Hanchar. If nobody knows about a Belarusian politician in the West and he doesn't enjoy such support as Lukashenka in Russia, such politician can't get to a village. Moreover, people ask every politician concrete questions: what can you give except for the things that Lukashenka has already promised? Bare political principles are meant for politicians, first of all. People should eat and wear something, raise children. People say: if you can turn our economy to Europe – prove it. There must be guarantees. When Yeltsin opposed Gorbachev, the guarantee was support of the West and the USA. They did everything to build up his power and ensure his staying in office. The famous "Bush gammons" are one of the proofs. The same thing with Belarus – there must be a guarantee that we won't live worse that we used to. In case, if the life doesn't change at all, what do we need a new head of the State for? It is enough to leave the incumbent in power.

***– What is your attitude to the recent publications in the press about your possible role of a political leader?***

– My present political ambition is to work with the UCP. The four years of imprisonment has changed many things. I need to evaluate the present situation, my fortes and foibles, distinguish what and how I should begin. My personal opinion is that a leader is not the person who has the privilege of the first throne speech. It is the person who undertakes the responsibility to go to the full length of something. Secondly, it is the person that could unite all opposition-minded citizens and politicians. Thirdly, it is a person whom people can believe. Fourthly, this person should be immaculate and there can't be any doubt in him. Fifthly, it should be a well-known person, active politician, whom people see in his everyday activity. Without these features it is impossible to begin something. To be sincere, right now I am not ready to take this burden, not because I don't know what to do, but because of the great responsibility. I should say that at present I consider Anatol Liabiedzka the leader and an authoritative person in the Belarusian opposition. I listen to his opinion. For me he is a dependable person, I trust him. Time will show what will be in future. If Lukashenka doesn't leave me any choice, maybe I'll have to vie with him, but I wouldn't like to do it, as there are more worthy, informed and experienced people on our political arena. I think that I need some time to get used to the changes that have taken place. Instead of pursuing my personal interest, I will support the opposition politicians who are working now.



Andrei Klimau with his wife Tatsiana during the meeting at PA HRC Viasna

***– Have you already been to Zinaida Hanchar?***

– I phoned her. She was very glad. It was hard for me to phone there as I can't get used to the thought that Viktar is not with us.

***– What was your reaction when you heard about Viktar's disappearance?***

– Do you remember that somebody was shooting at Viktar, his secretary was wounded, and there were bullet holes in the car? He told me that anything could happen to him. When it happened, I had no doubts who was behind what the motives were. I think that Lukashenka still has a difficult choice between the two alternatives: either he will have to take the blame for kidnapping Viktar Hanchar and take the responsibility as well or lead the investigation to the end and let those who have committed the crime face the trial. I have no doubts that these people are in Belarus, in official posts, moreover, they have the official powers of either KGB or the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Only they could commit the crime and remain unpunished.

***– What relations did you have with the people during your imprisonment?***

– Sometimes they were not very good. For the majority of prisoners Lukashenka possesses authority, not because they like him or because he is a good politician, but because he signs amnesties. For them amnesty is everything, in spite of the fact that in some time they get imprisoned again. I am 100% convinced that all businessmen imprisoned under political articles, are kept in jail because of self-will of the authorities. If we use their approach to the criminal cases, we can imprison all businessmen, including the unborn ones, as every kind of economic activity independent from the State is considered to be criminal. That is the interpretation of the law by the incumbent State bodies. There are many people who did not mean to commit crimes, many clever people with whom I could find common language, in spite of the fact that they have gone through more difficulties in the penitentiary system than me. I can't tell the exact number, but one out of four people kept in jail are innocent.

***– Did you meet with Iury Bandazheuski?***

– When I saw Bandazheuski behind bolt and bar, I was shocked. I am a businessman and the authorities could always find some fault with me, but Bandazheuski is a professor, doctor of medicine, a well-known person, who was telling the truth about the Chernobyl tragedy, which the present authorities try to hide. It is very difficult for him in such conditions. First of all, he suffers from the impossibility to deal with the scientific activity.

***– What will you choose for yourself: politics or human rights activity?***

– One can't divide. In order to come to the next election with the normal political capital, the present opposition must reach every citizen by helping them. We can't support everyone economically, but we must protect people's rights or at least try to. If we don't manage to do it now, there's no sense in participating in the would-be election, it will be the repetition of the last one.

***– You are not the first to declare the intention to go into politics. Then people changed their mind. Maybe it is connected with certain disappointment. Won't you decide otherwise in some time?***

– You should understand the motives of my position. I do it not for somebody, but for myself. I can't be in peace with oneself seeing iniquity around. Moreover, I don't want to make Lukashenka a gift – to suddenly leave it all. Every Belarusian should understand that even if he is the only one to fight against the regime, the regime is not free in its actions. At present the politicians and human rights activists canTt help everybody, but even the fact of their existence and work inhibits the dictatorship. The dictatorship has to count with the opposition. Even if I don't realize my political ends, the fact of my existence and activity will make somebody's life easier and it will make me more comfortable. Why can't I defend my interests in my own country? Why should I flee? Let Lukashenka flee, he can go to Russia, for instance. I am not going to move abroad.

**Noted down by Tatsiana REVIAKA.**

# Chronicle

At 5 p.m. ***on March 15*** Maladechna police detained Young Front members ***Maxim Hurski*** and ***Alies Rydzeuski***. "They were distributing human rights editions in Maladechna downtown, when a police car approached them. The police officers detained the guys and took them to the city police station. The police major on duty told the representatives of the Human Rights Center Viasna and Belarusian Helsinki Committee, who came to the station, that the guys would be kept there for 3 hours and then be released. He did not make it clear if the guys would be charge.

***On March 18*** Savetski borough court of Minsk heard the case of ***Mikalai Statkievich***. Statkevich was charged with organizing an unauthorized procession on March 15 (Constitution Day) under Art. 167.3 part 2 of the Code of Administrative Infringements. The court found Statkievich guilty of violating administrative legislation and punished the leader of Social Democratic Party with 10 days of arrest.

***On March 25*** Volha Zavadskaia (mother of ORT cameraman Zmitsier Zavadski), his wife Sviatlana Zavadskaia and Sviatlana's lawyer Siarhiei Tsurko filed a complain against the verdict of Miensk Regional Court with the Supreme Court. "Siarhiei Tsurko's opinion is printed below: We are not satisfied with the verdict of Miensk Regional Court, as it has found Ihnatovich and Malik guilty of kidnapping Zmitsier Zavadski in spite of the divergence and insufficiency of the evidence. The investigators grossly violated the formal procedures while obtaining the evidence that serves as the ground for the verdict. The major question that is still there is their implication in Zmitsier Zavadski's disappearance. We demand the closure of the case against Ihnatovich and Malik on the episode concerning Zavadski because of lack of evidentiary support. If it happens, the investigation will continue. It is not enough knowing about the kidnap, we need to know what followed it. At present, we have no answer to the main question – where is Zmitsier Zavadski."

***On March 27*** Rechytsa town court was to have tried ***Natallia Brel*** (upon the first part of Article No. 368, insult to the president of the Republic of Belarus). However, the accused did not appear in court for a second time in spite of the reconduction ruling. As a result, the trial was delayed for unknown time. It is rumored that Natallia Brel has left Belarus and is in Belgium where she has applied for political asylum. If this information proves to be true the case can be considered in absence of the accused.

***On March 27*** a police inspector from Partyzanski Borough Department of Internal Affairs phoned the office of the PA Center for Human Rights headed by Viera Stramkouskaia. He said that the BBIA had received from Belarusian Military Prosecutor's office materials for the initiation of a criminal case against her. "At 4 p.m. on March 28 the police inspector will come to the office to speak with the advocate on this matter. The police has also invited there journalists and Iu. Chatsviarukhin. Son of Chairman of Miensk City Court F. Ardziaka knocked down ChatsviarukhinTs wife while driving car. Viera Stramkouskaia participates in this case as ChatsviarukhinTs advocate. That's why M. Ardziak, Chairman of Miensk City Court and Belarusian Military ProsecutorTs office, pressurized Stramkouskaia for two months and directed the materials for disciplinary punishment of the advocate to Miensk advocatory board and the material for initiation of the criminal case – to Miensk Partyzanski BBIA.

I***n March*** Horadnia residents ***Sviatlana Nekh*** and ***Zmitsier Ivanouski*** applied to Horadnia executive committee for permission to organize a number of pickets against the criminal prosecution of Mikola Markievich and Paviel Mazheika. Markevich and Mazheika are the journalists of the recently banned independent newspaper Pahonia. "A number of pickets had been planned to be held in one of the most crowded place of Horadnia – near the House of Communication. The pickets had a common slogan "I have the right!". However, the city executive committee, chairperson Aliaxandr Antonienka and administrator Aliaxandr Kalachou in particular, not only banned the pickets, but also warned the applicants about "personal responsibility in case of unauthorized picketing". "At the same time Horadnia executive committee warned the citizens Sviatlana Niekh and Zmitsier Ivanouski, that all their further applications would be rejected. This decision is motivated by the fact that "the above mentioned citizens repeatedly violated the legislation, when organizing various public actions". "Sviatlana Niekh and Zmitsier Ivanouski plan to appeal to court against the decision of the Hrodna city executive committee.



*In March Belarusian independent trade unions held a picket against the constantly deteriorating life standards, wage and pension arrears that have become a usual case in our country...*

***In March*** Iury Zaitsau (father of ***Andrei Zaitsau*** who committed suicide when special service agents had tried to recruit him) filed a written complaint with Homel regional court. Earlier Homiel Savietski borough court considered Iury Zaitsau's complaint. Zaitsau complained about the ruling of the investigator of Savietski borough prosecutor's office, who refused to initiate a criminal case to investigate Andrei's suicide. "Iury Zaitsau and his advocate Zmitsier Ivanishka consider illegal the ruling of Savietski borough court. They thing that this ruling violates their rights and will insist on instituting a criminal case to investigate the driving of Andrei Zaitsaw to suicide. "Zmitsier Ivanishka: "There is the fact Ц that Andrei Zaitsau was driven to suicide. There is a death note openly saying about the pressure on the part of secret services. There is a tape with the recording of Andrei's conversation with a KGB agent. Well, if it was some other person there would be no problem in instituting a criminal case. However, special services have a lot to do with this concrete case.a I started questioning the people, who had a direct contact to Andrei Zaitsau. People from Andrei's circles knew he was under KGB pressure. He told his friends a lot. Three people have already shared their information and opinions with me". "Now Zaitsau case materials are at Homiel Savietski borough prosecutor's office.

***On March 31*** the trial over the journalists ***Mikola Markievich*** and ***Paviel Mazheika*** of the newspaper Pahonia liquidated by the authorities was appointed on April 9. The journalists are charged with the defamation of the president (the second part of Article No. 367 of the Criminal Code) for which one can be punished with up to five years of imprisonment. Judge of Horadnia Lieninski Borough Mikalai Siarhieika will preside at the trial.

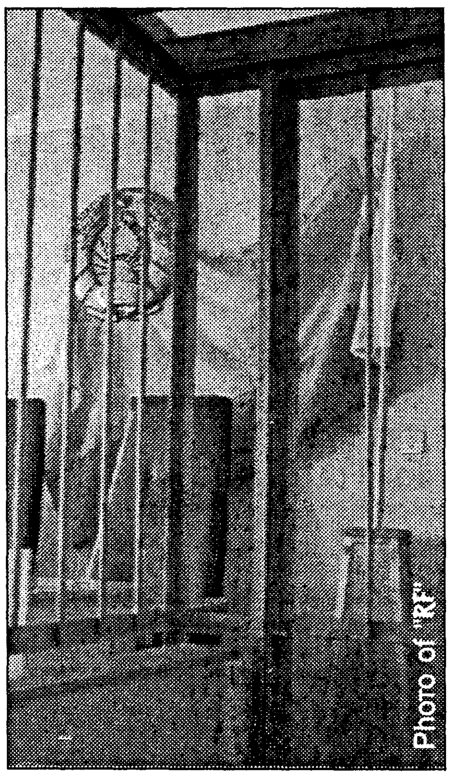
# DEPRESSANT FOR MIA

Recently, an interesting meeting took place in Miensk. Now, it wasn't on the Freedom Day, traditionally spoilt with the police activity. It was another meeting, in the notorious Banhalor square and didn't receive much publicity. Nevertheless, it was one of the main events of the past fortnight. It is difficult to imagine, but the meeting organizers were policemen. When did you see such things? According to information of FM-radio stations the policemen demanded to release their former colleagues Marat Novik and Iury Trus, imprisoned for abuse of their official powers. The picket participants asserted that this imprisonment had been a result of the campaign directed at discrediting of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) with the aim of ridding of Minister Uladzimir Navumau.

It's worth mentioning that the trial over the mentioned persons was closed and was aimed at hiding the "methods of work of the police investigators" (by the way, it was the police initiative). What made then the policemen publicly express their (?!) thoughts and protest? All the more so, that the history of heroes of this drama, workers of Miensk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs (BBIA) is quite a simple and common one. Unknown people robbed a flat. The owner called the police and named a "significant" feature of the robbers – they wore black coats. The policemen didn't waste their time Ц they seized the first passers-by who were wearing such coats. In the police station they spent several hours torturing the suspects in order to make the latter ones take the blame and tell about the details of the crime. However, this time such reliable means of convincing as gas-mask, truncheons, "swallow" position (policemen put legs and hands of the suspect in handcuffs, then use one more pair of handcuffs to chain the two other pairs on the suspect's back) failed to help the law enforcers. It was just a trifle, everything would go as usual, but... It appeared that the detainees had relatives who had high posts in the Prosecutor's office and in the police. This circumstance became a tragedy for the poor investigators. In spite of the fact that at first neither the district Prosecutor's office nor MIA security service found any corpus delicti, the criminals faced the trial and received just punishment.

How can we then explain the meeting activity of their comrades? The explanation is more than simple! Now there exists a precedent when a "vampire" (the policemen who violates the law) has to answer for his actions. It's a pity, but we should calm the defenders of Trus and Novik: their case is not the brick that can destroy the whole system.

All people who have ever been to a police station can confirm that tortures are not an accident but a SYSTEM for the Belarusian police. My journalist experience can testify to it, too. An acquaintance of mine told me that after he graduated from Police academy he had to go through "the initiation into cops" – they made him beat detainees. According to him, it happens to every newcomer. Later I tried to defend two helpless women who were beaten and harassed by a district police inspector at one of the Miensk BBIAs. As a result I was fired and the policeman is still working in the same place. Neither applications to the Prosecutor's office, nor the results of the medical examination, numerous pieces of indirect


Photo of "RF"

evidence helped us. Do you know who was among those who "saved" the mentioned police inspector? The same officer allowed criminal proceedings against Novik and Trus. This is the role of relations in our society...

Now you can give me the answer who discredits the law machinery and how long can the MIA minister Uladzimir Navumau escape responsibility. By the way, he is the Head of the interdepartmental commission on search of the people who have disappeared in Belarus. Earlier he was working in the presidential security and was giving orders to the people who are suspected of abductions, including Ihnatovich and Malik, sentenced in Zavadski's case...

**Vadzim DOUNAR.**

# "I WANT TO BE HEARD..."

***Human Righ:s Center Viasna has received a letter from the penitentiary situated in the village of Hlybokaie (Vitsiebsk region). The readers know its author Siarhiei Pratsiraieu who spent two years in the condemned cell. This letter says about the conditions of the prisoners' life in one of the most known Bealrusian penal institutions.***

Siarhiei Pratsiraieu writes the following: "They initiated the case against me in 1996. Judge Tkach sentenced me to death penalty. I spent two years in the condemned cell in the pre-trial prison in Valadarski Street. I still don't want to recollect the things I went through there. Then, in 1999 the presidential decree substituted death penalty with 20 years of imprisonment.

In the penitentiary I regularly receive bulletins Right to Freedom. I am very pleased that Viasna does such important work. On the other hand, the information about what is going on in the country shocks us. In jail it is also getting from bad to worse.

One can't get work the-re. Even if a prisoner works, he receives 370 rubles a month (about 20 cents). Where can I then find money to pay the taxes the State levies for processing complaints?

The cells are overcrowded. Sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, we have to sit locked in cells. We have no opportunity to go out for a walk to breathe some fresh air. The walking yard is very small, about 400 people have to walk there simultaneously. There are terrible conditions in the sauna, which is 5 x 10 meters. The dressing room is 3 x 5. In the barracks without cells there are three-storied pallets. In the barrack with 300 people there are only 3 lavatory pans. The-re's no sense in speaking of sanitation. We are not allowed to have pens at long-term meetings lest we write something and pass to our relatives.

The medical department has been out of medicines for half a year already. I was ill for two months, asked them to examine me. They X-rayed my lungs only in a month. The results were shocking Ц I had had pleurisy, but there was still some liquid in my lungs, which is half way to tuberculosis. Besides, the illness resulted in heart complications. The medics gave me needles of the medicines my relatives managed to pass, for which I am very grateful.

I have many things to write about and I want to be heard. That's why I have one question: are there any international organizations for giving support to such people as me that are interested in such information?

Thank You all once again for Your work.

Respectfully Yours,

**Siarhiei Pratsiraieu.**

Address:
211800, Рэспубліка Беларусь,
Віцебская вобласць,
г. Глыбокае, УЖ 15/13 —
ПКТ-22, атрад 24.

# WHO STANDS BEHIND *ZAVTRA*?

## *MINISTRY OF INFORMATION DOESN'T NOTICE THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST-FASCISTS.*

In the time when the leading Belarusian newspapers and magazines are united in State holdings, when people don't receive their salaries in the Belarusian newspaper *Litaratura i mastatstva*, magazines *Krynitsa*, *Polymia*, *Mastatstva* and *Maladosts* for several months and all workers seem to have forgotten about honoraria, the notorious Russian newspaper *Zavtra* freely comes to Belarus. Earlier one could buy this ancestor of the Belarusian *Slavianski Nabat* near Kamarouski market. Now the local lobby of this odious Moscow newspaper feels confident.

We should mention that the first attempt of open distribution of Zavtra took place two years ago. After an appropriate article in Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta Zavtra was quickly taken away from all news-stands of "Belsayuzdruk" distribution network. The mentioned article not only characterized the "new" newspaper and pointed at the organizations interested in its distribution. Now we can see that the exalted sirs didn't calm down and Zavtra has been on sale in the Belarusian regions for two months already.

Information for those who don't know: Zavtra is not a gray fly-sheet format newspaper but, probably, the main printed edition of the Russian jingo and communistic opposition. By the way, till 1996 the newspaper editors called it "a newspaper of spiritual opposition". Now it has turned into "a newspaper of the Russian State".

The newspaper editor, writer Alexandr Prokhanov considers himself national-communist, one can find the proofs not only in the content of his edition, but also in the name of his novel with the similar name. Finally, what else can we tell about the man who peacefully talks (there were articles of the considerable volume in the newspaper) with the leader of the Russian National Unity Alexandr Barkashov, support the anti-Semitic statements of Albert Makashov? What is strange, more "respectable" Gennadiy Zyuganov and Viktor Ilyukhin don't fear to appear in the company of these people. Their articles and interviews with them regularly appear on the newspaper's pages.



*"Slavonic Easter egg"*

In general, this edition surprises people with its ability to place together incompatible things: popularization of RNU and greetings to the veterans of the Second World War, Communistic ideology with having an orthodox priest in the company. These are the positive differences in comparison to the barely communistic Pravda. Nevertheless, the newspaper doesn't like to "make things too complicated". For instance, this is their attitude to the problem of capital punishment: "There's no need to execute the people that is dying out. We should organize one single execution of the Monster who has destroyed the great country, shot the Supreme Soviet with tanks, destroyed all useful arts and knowledge, defiled the sacrum and all values and year by year gives itself needles of youth elixir made of blood of Russian infants. They pull children from the mother's womb, grind in the meat-choppers, mix with Arcanum and inject into the rotting body of the Cannibal, increasing his hemoglobin."

As you see, the red-browns carry their ideas to the masses, using very simple and understandable language. When mentioning a politician whose views contradict to their own, it can be considered an accident. More often they "reward" the opponents with the insulting definitions such as "talkative as water in lavatory". They also have very nice names for articles: "A pale will be beaten into Yeltsin's grave", "Your fate will be terrible, enemies", "Twelve presidents' heads are chopped off", "Gorbachev and Yakovlev arise from their graves". Some headings can be considered as calls to the forcible change of power in Russia that seems to be our partner in the union. One can expect the reaction of the Ministry of Information if in a local newspaper there appears such slogan as "Belarusian, itTs time for revenge!". However, it finds it possible not to notice the growing Zavtra readership. In Belsayuzdruk I received the following explanations: if there're no objections from the Ministry of Information, Russian editions can be distributed within the united distribution network. All the payments are to be made in Belarusian rubles. That's why the Russians need a mediator. Here is one more interesting moment: in this case the mediator is the private joint-stock company "Orthodox Initiative" that stands at the head of the Belarusian anti-Semitism.

It's worth mentioning that the fly-sheets slogans are trifles in comparison to the ideological base provided for anti-Semitic, anti-Polish, anti-Lithuanian and anti-Ukrainian propaganda. The press has devoted many articles to the fact that the Belarusian court called the purely anti-Semitic book "War on the laws of villainy". Zavtra doesn't condemn this publication, on the contrary, it calls to issue it in Russia.

It is clear that Prokhanov and Co. managed to find adherents not only in our Ministry of Information, but in the "parliament" as well. At least one deputy, Siarhiei Kastsian, was publicly distributing such literature in the sitting hall (he presented every member of the "Chamber of Representatives" a copy of "War on the laws of villainy"). He has recently submitted to Litaratura I mastatstva an article against Vasil Bykau and Sviatlana Aliexievich. Most probably, he likes the writings of the Belarusian correspondent of Zavtra Iauhien Rostsikau very much. In any case, Kastsian's article resembles Rostsikau's "Rusted pens", where he calls almost all classics of the Belarusian literature "talentless androgynous creatures". The man who has a very slight relation to art, doesn't know the history of the Belarusian nation and its language, dares to make such conclusions.

At present Litaratura I mastatstva" actually ceased to be a weekly due to financial reasons, other Belarusian periodicals also experience great problems. The libraries can't subscribe to them any more as the State gives no money. I won't be surprised if soon Zavtra will replace some Belarusian newspapers in the libraries. Bu the way, it costs cheaper than the Belarusian newspapers.

**Vadzim DOUNAR.**

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